

NOVEMBER 2013

THANKSGIVING EDITION

*This month we observe the third anniversary of our first public rally, and of the City of Pittsburgh's historic ban on fracking. So we're taking this edition of **Marcellus Monthly** to celebrate those people and events for which we are especially grateful (and a few that we still hope to see).*

People Taking Action:

PowerShift 2013

PITTSBURGH: For the first time, the youth climate movement took its *Power Shift* conference outside of the D. C. area, to this city “in the crosshairs of the fracking industry.”

On its broad agenda, Power Shift holds environmental justice, divestment from fossil fuel corporations, commitment to a green economy, and halting mining of tar sands and fracking of shale gas.

Thousands of delegates joined in a ‘permitted’ march through the city, and 300 split off to the County Courthouse in support of a sit-in by our local fractivists. Other activities included two [field trips](#) to local fracking sites, visiting an elementary school where XTO (Exxon) was flaring gas, and an organic farmer whose land is now surrounded by a cryogenic processing plant, a gas pipeline, and fracking pad, and a generating station.

Global Frackdown

WORLDWIDE: On October 19, anti-fracking demonstrations and direct action were held in more than 28 different nations and more than half of the states in the U. S. For some people, fracking is an immediate threat to their communities; others are farther from the pads and pipelines, but can see the on-coming climate catastrophe of unconventional fossil fuels.

First Nations—New Brunswick, Canada

MONCTON (NB, Canada): The Elsipogtog First Nation (and others across Canada) are holding the Canadian government to its legal “duty to consult and accommodate aboriginal peoples” in any development on traditional land. In their eagerness to exploit unconventional gas, the Federal and provincial governments have bypassed that duty, as well as the actions of local



Protect Our Parks sits-in at the Allegheny County Executive's office during **PowerShift 2013**, Oct. 21. (Photo: Tom Jefferson)

communities council votes against fracking.

That conflict came to a head in New Brunswick when the RCMP (national police force) moved on demonstrators to enforce an injunction against their protests. Some demonstrators received gunshot wounds, and police cars were set afire (possibly by *agents provocateurs*). Non-aboriginal groups have been growing in support of the Elsipogtog protests.

Elected Officials Doing the Right Thing:

PITTSBURGH: Barbara Daly Danko, Allegheny County Council, who introduced a three-year moratorium on fracking in County parks. (We're waiting for other Council members to join as co-sponsors.)

Darlene Harris, President of Pittsburgh City Council, who has shared with County Council what the City learned about the dangers of fracking.

Bill Peduto, who has stood firm on City Council to defend our fracking ban and chose environmental health as a core issue in his mayoral campaign. (Remember to vote, Nov. 6)

HARRISBURG: Jim Ferlo, State Senator from Allegheny County, who proposed a state-wide fracking moratorium, SB-1100, co-sponsored by Senators Boscola, Dinniman, Kitchen, Leach, Schwank, Tartaglione, and Washington).

Jesse White, State Representative, who spoke out fearlessly on Act 13 and has kept fighting to restore safety and health to the people of Washington County.

BALCOMBE (Sussex, UK): MP Caroline Lucas, arrested with dozens of other demonstrators at this drilling site just 30 miles south of London. (See related story.)

Marcellus Protest is a project of the Thomas Merton Center (Pittsburgh, PA): www.thomasmertoncenter.org

We encourage you to print copies of this newsletter and to distribute it freely. You can download it from our website: www.marcellusprotest.org/news.

Frackers Cutting Their Losses

PITTSBURGH: The gas industry's *Marcellus Shale Coalition* has named a successor for Kathryn Klaber, CEO (and fracking's public face) since its inception. That role (with a new title of *President*) now goes to David Spigelmyer, who had represented Chesapeake Energy on MSC's board. His job as a Chesapeake V.P. was recently eliminated as the company scrambled to cut costs and avoid default on its loans. Upon landing safely at MSC, he and the Coalition congratulated each other as expected in such situations. [*Chesapeake itself, once the most aggressive of the frackers, is touted on Wall Street as a takeover target. Ms. Klaber's future plans have not been announced.*]

VANCOUVER (BC, Canada): An executive of Royal Dutch Shell calls the United States "over-fracked and over-drilled." His [statement](#) came as Shell continued divesting its underperforming acreage in North America and retreating, in the face of mass protests, from Romania and the Ukraine.

The Wall Street Journal also speculates that the future of Shell's ballyhooed Pennsylvania gas "cracker" plant is fading, as higher gas prices and new pipelines undermine its business case.

Fracking in North America is highly profitable for the suppliers of materials and services (such as Halliburton), but a bottomless cash "sink" for the drillers themselves, who have responded by short-changing leaseholders and stiff-arming regulators.

BALCOMBE (Sussex, U.K.): In a move reminiscent of the U.S. exit from Vietnam, Cuadrilla "declared success and went home" from its Balcombe drilling site. Calling the well "exploratory," Cuadrilla said its work is now "completed." The site has been the scene of a full-time encampment of protesters since July.

Communities and Nations Standing Up

PARIS: France's highest court upheld its national ban on fracking, and refused to reinstate drilling permits which had been revoked when the ban was implemented.

CLARKSBURG (W.Va.): Residents of Harrison County (West Virginia) have filed suit against Anter Resources, accusing the drillers of disturbing the "quality of life" in their community by ruining wells and roads, polluting the air, disrupting their peace and quiet and the "darkness of night." The complaint also cites some drilling workers for "harassing or menacing" citizens.

All I Want for Christmas

With all our reasons to be thankful, there are still a few more gifts we'd like to find under our tree next month:

- A final decision from Pa. State Supreme Court, already more than a year after oral arguments and 15 months after Commonwealth Court's ruling on Act 13.
- Allegheny County Council action on the proposed moratorium on fracking in parks, which now languishes in committee.

You—Our Volunteer Members

There has never been a paid staff; everything that happens is through your donations of time and money. We aren't naming names, but you know who you are. Here's to you, for all you do!

- Keeping us informed via Facebook and Twitter;
- Gathering contact info for our "fractivist directory;"
- Organizing seminars and town hall meetings;
- Leafleting at the County parks, diners, farmers' markets;
- Speaking to elected officials and in public assemblies.

A Range of Resources

Please check out our 'Resources' page at www.marcellusprotest.org/resources, and follow us on Facebook ([MarcellusProtest](#)) and Twitter ([@Marcellus SWPA](#)). Here is a sampling of our recent recommendations:

"[Getting Fracktion](#)": A comprehensive (for the moment) summary of the status of anti-fracking measures across the United States and internationally, from the [Democracy Center](#) for social, economic and environmental justice.

Non-consensual fracking? *Public Herald* [reports](#) on Pa. DEP issuing a drilling permit for fracking under land which the owner has refused to lease.

Upcoming Events in November:

(Full details, with latest updates, and a more extensive list of events, on-line at www.marcellusprotest.org/event_calendar.)

November 16 (Edinboro, PA): "[Raising Nurses' Voices on Fracking & Health](#)" conference sponsored by the Alliance of Nurses for Healthy Environments, with continuing education credit for nurses; Edinboro University, starting at 8:00am.

November 21 (Butler, PA): "[Fracking & Health](#)" *The Science of Shale Gas*, with Dr. Anthony Ingraffea. The second in a series, co-sponsored by Marcellus Protest, Marcellus Outreach Butler and others. Butler Community College Theater, 7:00pm.

November 25-26 (Pittsburgh—Duquesne University): "[Shale Gas Extraction Symposium](#)". (Free, registration required) Two days on the challenges of gas extraction: biological, climate, health and social impacts.

Updated information on these topics (with links to original sources), along with our calendar of upcoming events, and other resources, can be found at www.marcellusprotest.org.